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AUTHORITY

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HEADQUARTERS
ADVISORY TEAM 84 (KIEN PHONG PROVINCE)
DELTA REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND
APO 96215

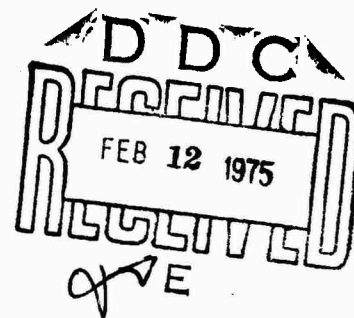
12 February 1973

MACDR-84

SUBJECT: Province Senior Advisor Completion of Tour Report
(RCS MACCORDS 174.01) - ATHOL M. SMITH, 263-60-5415

THRU: DEPCORDS
Delta Regional Assistance Command
APO 96215

TO: HQ, US Military Assistance Command
ATTN: MACCORDS (ACofStaff, CORDS)
APO 96222



Attached is my completion of tour report for the period January 1973 thru to 12 February 1973.

This report is brief in several areas where no significant changes have occurred since the report of my predecessor, dated 19 December 1972.

ATHOL M. SMITH
Colonel, Infantry
Province Senior Advisor/Commanding

DAMO-ODU
73B020
Inclosure 4

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ADB001519

S E C T I O N * I

NAME: SMITH, Athol M.

GRADE: COLONEL

SSAN: 263-60-5415

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Infantry

PROVINCE: Kien Phong

INCLUSIVE DATES OF TOUR: 1 January 1973 - 12 February 1973

EXPECTED REASSIGNMENT DATE: 13 February 1973

PREVIOUS TOUR(S) IN VIETNAM (DATE - INCLUSIVE):

July 1966 - June 1967

ASSIGNMENT OF PREVIOUS VIETNAM TOURS: Battaion Commander
22 AVN Battalion and G-3 Air II FFV.

S E C T I O N * II

1. What background did you have for your position?
 - One previous tour in RVN and 22 years experience in Army.
2. What training did you have for this position?
 - PSA course at US Institute for Mil Assist - FT Bragg, NC.
3. What additional training would you suggest for your position?
 - Full language course to attain reasonable fluency.
4. What should be the length of tour for your position?
 - A 12 months minimum appears desirable although there is no single answer. It depends on the calibre and past experience of the officer assigned.
5. Was support from Region and/or Saigon Headquarters satisfactory?
If not, specify deficiencies.
 - yes.
6. Were there any programs delayed because support was not forthcoming?
Were there any programs that were especially successful because support was readily available? which ones?
 - No.
7. Do the reporting requirements as set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 provide a means for reporting all information of present and future value? If not what changes would you recommend?
 - Yes.
8. Do the MACCORDS Management Information System Field Reporting requirements set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 adequately measure progress in pacification programs?
 - Yes, from a US point of view it's the best we have and as good as any. However, it does not measure the motives and intangible reasons behind progress that are so important in a conflict of this kind.
9. Were instructions from higher headquarters clear with no conflicting requirements? If not, what specific instances occurred where conflicting instructions were received?
 - Yes.

10. The most clearly defined and directed programs are:
 1. Land Reform.
 2. National Fund for Local Development.
 3. Rural Development Cadre.
11. The most effective para military forces are:
 1. Regional Force.
 2. Popular Force.
 3. People's Self Defense Force.
12. The most successful pacification programs are:
 1. Land Reform.
 2. Rural Development Cadre.
 3. Territorial Forces.
13. The programs that have the greatest impact upon the pacification effort are:
 1. Land Reform.
 2. Territorial Forces.
 3. Public Works.
14. The least successful pacification programs are:
 1. Social Welfare/Refugee.
 2. Public Health (however, this service is showing rapid improvement)
 3. Taxation (this program is improving rapidly).
15. The programs that have the least impact upon the pacification effort are:
 1. Chieu Hoi.
 2. Youth affairs (this is perhaps due to its' present low level of development).
16. The rural people are aware of the pacification efforts the GVN and US are making.

- Yes.
17. The people, as you know them, are (more) (less) committed to the GVN than when you assumed your job. Why?

- Indeterminable - 6 weeks is too short a period to make such a judgement. However the cooperation of the people during the cease-fire onslaught of the NVA, indicate a high level of commitment to the GVN.

18. Do you feel that the pacification plan is sufficiently detailed to provide guidance and set goals that will result in security and growth of Vietnam? (Yes) (No) If no, what change in the plan should be made?

- Yes! However, more specific course of action and tasks should be added.

19. Do you feel that the pacification plan was adequately communicated and explained to you and your counterpart? (Yes) (No) If not, how can this be accomplished?

- Yes.

S E C T I O N * III

TERRITORIAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE

RF/PF:

Territorial forces remain a strong and viable military force in Kien Phong Province. Except for some isolated outposts near the Cambodia Border, local forces have withstood the numerous attacks of both NVA and VC since the cease fire announcement.

The leaders of Kien Phong Province are training minded and systematically train and retrain the territorial forces of this province. However, unit training has come to virtual halt with the advent of the cease fire announcement in order to utilize all available forces. The 436 RF Bn, formed by cross-leveling from Go Cong Province, was withdrawn from the training center and deployed as a mobile Bn. This unit was not due to finish training until April. Requests were also made to reschedule the units that were to go to RF Bn refinement training in February since adherence to the schedule would have resulted in both RF mobile battalions being absent from the province at the same time. The examples cited above indicate that this province will have difficulty complying with the 1973 training schedule due to the current tactical situation. It remains to be seen what effect the cease fire will have upon the training program. It is anticipated, however, that the territorial forces of Kien Phong will maintain a high state of quality.

PSDF:

The People's Self Defense Forces of Kien Phong have proved to be effective within their limitations. They have held their own against light and sporadic enemy activity but are not presently capable of withstanding significant enemy attacks against their hamlets.

52 hamlets are currently secured by PSDF and NP and the program is growing in numbers. Presently there are 61,845 members; 29,810 combat PSDF with 13,295 weapons issued and 31,675 support PSDF. Most goals have almost been achieved with the exception of the goal for 59,100 support PSDF. A continuous monitoring system over the district and village training has been instituted by sector to insure the training is continuous and beneficial. Results thus far have shown tremendous improvement in the calibre of leadership. This program should continue to improve as it receives more trained leaders.

PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTORATE

NATIONAL POLICE FIELD FORCE:

The National Police Field Forces are well trained in both civil police and paramilitary operations. Operations are conducted based on information supplied by the Police Special Branch and other intelligence collecting agencies. Recently the field police were instrumental in causing the failure of enemy initiated actions to "Crab Land" prior to and after the case fire. Operations directed towards the apprehension of draft evaders have been very successful and operations based on the F-6 program have shown favorable results. The one main problem is the failure in some instances by intelligence agencies or coordinate information with the field police for their action.

NATIONAL POLICE OPERATIONS:

Since the arrival of the present Province Police Chief, LT .COL. Huynh Dat Kinh, on 9 January 1973, the National Police have shown improvements. One of the major accomplishments has been the establishment of an effective inspection program, section chiefs of all departments are required to periodically inspect District and Village stations. The results of these inspections are forwarded to the commander in writing. This information will be used to determine that areas lacking in efficiency and in-Province training courses will be established in that particular area.

Due to the interest, leadership ability and foresight of the Police commander, a substantial increase in the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the National Police is fore-seen.

PHUNG HAONG (POPAT):

The foundation for information of the POPAT program is at Village and Hamlet level. It is common knowledge that VCI living in a particular Village are known to the average official and resident of that Village. However, because of the lack of friendly relations between the Police and general public, little or no information pertaining to VC/VCI is volunteered.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

REFUGEES AND SOCIAL WELFARE:

Social Welfare has been the weakest service in the province. This weakness was particularly critical as more than 45,000 war victims were created in Kien Phong Province during the NVA offensives before the cease-fire. However, during January, a new Social welfare.

Service Chief arrived in Province. He is young, but a graduate of the N.I.A. in Saigon. His arrival appears to have had a very beneficial effect on the speed with which war victims are cared for. On the evening that the cease-fire was declared, the district town of Hong Ngu was rocketed and about 90 homes were destroyed in the fire. Initial payments had been made to these people within three days after the attack along with distribution of emergency rice allowances. Also in Hong Ngu District, some homes were destroyed along the Hekong River during an NVA attack, on the 27th of January and subsequent to the cease-fire. Several out-posts in Hong Nga have been overrun by the NVA. These areas are still too insecure for a full assessment of the war victims created. It is estimated that the fighting in Hong Ngu during the 12 hours proceeding the cease fire and subsequently has resulted in an additional 600 to 700 war victims.

The previous Social Welfare Service Chief was relieved in late December of 1972. During the period in which his deputy was in charge of the service, the Province Chief took strong action to improve the Social Welfare Service. The Province Chief personally ensured that payments for the destruction of Hien Duc hamlet were finally made. Further, he insured they were all made at one time, thus reducing the logistical problems in reaching this remote hamlet while also reducing the inevitable graft and corruption.

The Kien Phong refugee problem has been largely alleviated. Refugees who had been residing in an official camp in Hong Hgu, were moved to a permanent refugee resettlement area in Long Khanh Province in MR III. This move was accomplished through the personal intervention of Dr. Dan of the LDHB office. Dr. Dan had to endure considerable personal criticism from General Phong of the CPDC and General Mghi of MR IV. Dr. Dan's insistence that these people who had existed as refugees for more than two and half years and who had been driven out of their homes twice by the NVA be moved and properly cared for, deserves the highest praise.

Also during December, a new resettlement site by the name of Lung Bong was established under Father Bach using Dr. Dan's LDHB program. These people comprised the remainder of the repatriates that came from Cambodia during the May 1970 incursion. This settlement now comprises approximately all people. Their goal of self-sufficiency should be reached six months earlier than normal. At the suggestion of CORDS, the Agriculture Service is going to provide 3/10 of a hectare of grain sorghum for each of the families at the resettlement area. In addition, the Agriculture Service is providing the training necessary for the growing of this new crop.

VILLAGE SELF-DEVELOPMENT:

VSD continues to suffer in Kien Phong due to the poor planning cycle imposed by Saigon. Construction in the Plain of Roads area during the rainy season is impossible. However, construction projects

Under the 1972 VSD program are showing an accelerating pace of completion. The Province Chief has personally promised the UR IV commander, Gen. Nghi, that all Kien Phong VSD projects would be finished by the end of the plan year.

RD CADRE:

The RD Cadre are continuing in the same manner as mentioned in the 19 December report. The current project being pursued by the Province Group Chief, is the construction of an RDC training center. Due to the involvement of the RDC with 26 government programs, and the heavy use of the province training center for the training of village and hamlet officials, this construction project has become most necessary.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

There has been no substantial change in the Province Council. Most projects are now reaching completion due to the return of the dry season and very strong concern of the Province Chief. However, much of the funds required to be spent on peoples organizations was put into soccer teams.

AID IN KIND:

AIK Funds have been canceled in conjunction with the US Military withdrawal.

CHIEU HOI:

The primary importance of the Chieu Hoi Center in Kien Phong is the unnecessary drain that it represents in the GVN Budget. It is waste-ful and should be closed.

PUBLIC HEALTH:

Two new hospital wards (1971 projects) have been completed. These are an outpatient clinic, and a pediatrics clinic. In additions a new hospital warehouse has been completed. These three buildings are in a seperate portion of the province town. As soon as funds are available, the public health offices in the hospital will be remodeled and the two new wards placed with the rest of the hospital. At this time the Public Health Offices will be moved to the former outpatient and pediatrics ward.

EDUCATION:

There has been no significant change in the Educational situation.

PUBLIC WORKS

The performance of the Public Works Service, which is headed by a very capable chief, continues to be excellent, especially considering their lack of equipment. The Public Works Service has submitted a request that the ferry boats under its control be placed directly under the control of the national government. The Tan Tich Ferry is one of strategic value to Kien Phong Province, as it connects the province to the regional headquarters of Con Tho. The great majority of traffic to cross this ferry is military and not civilian, most of the civilian commerce comes by way of LTL 30 and QL 4 from Saigon. As a result, this ferry cannot pay its own way and the funding for its operations and maintenance is much less than that required for reliable operation.

LAND REFORM:

The Kien Phong Land Reform program remains the premier successful effort of the province. In addition to surpassing all objectives to date some 10,000 hectares of abandoned land and 40,435 hectares of undeveloped and relative insecure land can be made available for distribution if the ceasefire develops into a true peace.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE:

Kien Phong is a priority province for grain sorghum in Vietnam. Over 70 metric tons of seed were delivered to Kien Phong and distributed to farmers by the Agricultural Service before any of the other 15 provinces in the Delta. A total of 111 metric tons of seed have been delivered to the province and over 5,400 hectares of sorghum have been planted.

YOUTH AFFAIRS:

Youth affairs are being well handled in Kien Phong by the RD Cadre. Kien Phong has one of two or three rural teenager organizations in the Delta that exists in fact, and not just in paper. The RDC have taken a group of these rural teenagers and put them on national TV in Saigon.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION:

The three basic problems of public administration in Vietnam are well known: Finance, Corruption, and Training. These are all problems that require basic policy changes and enforcement which must come from Saigon, of which little can be done at the province level-- On the issue of finance, the new decrees which have emanated from Saigon during the emergency powers granted President Thieu, have shown promise of improving this situation --

The proper training of officials has still failed to materialize. The village level people who are implement the new finance program, as well as all the other programs, are nortorisously ignorant of the objectives and the methods for their implementation. The shortage of qualified personnel at the province level is also acute. The solution required pressure, guidance and assistance from Saigon to properly promulgate this training. Otherwise an already over taxed province staff, particularly in the technical fields, could not produre the desired results - -

On the issue of corruption Kien Phong is no worse and probably better their most provinces. However, the survival of the present government is at stake unless corruption is markedly decreased. Any crack-down on corruption must start at the top and there has been little evidence that the top brass, from Saigon on down, have any inclination to voluntarity sacrifice their illicit incomes.

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